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Letter dated 3 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you herewith the concept note for the Security Council open debate on a comprehensive strategy for the realization of peace and security in Somalia, to be held on 10 March 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Li Baodong
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the
People's Republic of China to the United Nations

Annex to the letter dated 3 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comprehensive strategy for the realization of peace and security in Somalia

I. Background

The international community has been striving to resolve the Somali issue for almost two decades. A comprehensive strategy is urgently needed, owing to the complexity and interconnections of continued instability, terrorism, the deteriorating humanitarian situation and growing instances of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

China takes the opportunity of its presidency of the Security Council in March 2011 to convene an open debate in order to discuss the situation and seek a comprehensive strategy for the realization of peace and security in Somalia.

The peace process in Somalia is now at a critical juncture. At the end of 2010, an inclusive Cabinet led by the Prime Minister of Somalia, Abdullahi Mohamed, was approved by the Transitional Federal Parliament, thus ending the paralysis within the transitional federal institutions. With the end of the transition approaching (August 2011), Somalia and the relevant stakeholders are increasingly concerned over the completion of the outstanding transitional tasks, particularly the drafting of the Constitution. The post-transitional arrangements have also become a focus of attention. The recent decision by the Transitional Federal Parliament to extend its term for another three years has been controversial. An inclusive dialogue among all Somalis and key stakeholders will help to map the way forward for Somalia.

The forces of the Transitional Federal Government bear the primary responsibility for safeguarding peace and security in Somalia. The fighting between the Government forces supported by AMISOM and Al-Shabaab militias has been continuing around Mogadishu and in the surrounding towns. Recently the Government forces have made some territorial gains in Mogadishu. The security situation in southern and central Somalia remains fragile, however, and the impact of the merger between Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam is still unknown. While there has been limited progress in the development of the security sector, the Transitional Federal Government and its partners need to redouble their efforts in this regard.

Despite international efforts to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia, the problem has worsened in recent years. The level of violence employed by the pirates is increasing and their areas of activities are expanding. There were 219 attacks in 2010 compared with 35 in 2005 and, right now, more than 20 ships with some 700 sailors are still in captivity. Some analysts warn that Somali pirates are becoming the "masters" of the Indian Ocean. The African Union urges the Security Council to adopt a holistic approach to this issue, with a view to effectively addressing its underlying causes.

The long-standing civil war has caused enormous sufferings to the Somali people. The United Nations estimates that nearly 2.4 million Somalis are in need of assistance now. According to humanitarian aid agencies, the ongoing drought is likely to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. The United Nations agencies have

responded immediately with $4.5 million of aid in January 2011 and $60 million allocated for the coming months. The international community needs to step up its support for the people of Somalia.

AMISOM has reached the previously approved strength of 8,000 troops. On 22 December 2010, the Security Council endorsed the African Union's proposal for the deployment of an additional 4,000 troops and the requisite logistical support package for AMISOM. The enlargement of AMISOM in Mogadishu should help the Transitional Federal Government in promoting the inclusive political dialogue with other groups and expanding the delivery of essential services to the people. While Uganda and Guinea have pledged to deploy troops expeditiously to Somalia, the African Union has been undertaking consultations to help to generate more political support, as well as material and financial support from the partners.

II. Objectives and issues for discussion

The main objectives of the meeting will be:

- To reiterate that as all the relevant issues, including continued instability and terrorism in Somalia, are interconnected, a comprehensive strategy is urgently needed. More political, economic and financial support from the international community will help to resolve these issues.
- To provide a platform to undertake more consultations, among Council members, the wider membership and key stakeholders, on the extension of the mandate of the Transitional Federal Parliament, transitional arrangements, the drafting of the Constitution and the way forward for Somalia, etc.
- To underline the importance of supporting the training and equipping of Somali security forces, strengthening the security institutions and preparing for security challenges such as terrorism.
- To call on the international community to combat Somali piracy in a more concerted and effective manner and draw the attention of the international community to the Somali humanitarian situation with a view to providing aid and preventing youths from being recruited by pirates and insurgents.
- To mobilize more support for AMISOM, with the objective of covering areas that are not included in the United Nations support package, including reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment, and to facilitate the deployment of the 4,000 additional troops.

III. Expected outcome of the meeting

The Security Council is expected to adopt a presidential statement as an outcome of the open debate.